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FM AMEMBASSY ASUNCION  
TO RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES PRIORITY 2583  
RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 5149  
INFO RUCNMER/MERCOSUR COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS ASUNCION 001248

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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EAGR](#) [AMGT](#) [ASEC](#) [PA](#) [AR](#) [CI](#) [UY](#)

SUBJECT: COUNTRY CLEARANCE FOR TREASURY ADVISOR JOSEPH  
BOGNANNO

REF: BUENES AIRES 02752

¶1. Per reftel, country clearance is granted for Joseph Bognanno, Diplomatic Passport: 900525202, Clearance:Secret, for travel to Asuncion during the period of December 17-22, 2006, for the purpose of working with INL to provide technical assistance to the Superintendent of Banks and Financial Intelligence Unit of Paraguay. The control officer for the visit is Oscar Rivera, office tel.: 011-595-21-213-715, ext. 2238. Fax: 011-595-21-214-479.

¶2. Due to budget constraints, post will only provide airport expediter for initial arrival and final departure of employees assigned to post, as well as for senior officials. Other travelers requiring special assistance should request an expediter in advance and provide fiscal data. Taxis are available from the airport. A taxi ride from the airport to your hotel may cost you anywhere from 45,000 to 60,000 guaranies, approximately 8 to 12 USD.

¶3. All U.S. citizens traveling to Paraguay are now required to have visas. Airport and border visas are not available at this time. Please contact the Paraguayan Embassy or closest Consulate for more information, especially if you require a multiple entry visa.

¶4. Airport Tax: All visitors are requested to pay airport tax when departing Paraguay. For international flights, the tax is US\$25 per passenger (vat-exempt) or guarani equivalent, payable in cash only. Accredited personnel are exempted from paying this tax.

¶5. If travel plans involve visiting neighboring countries in the region, please arrive with appropriate visas and obtain country clearances from the appropriate U.S. Embassies. Brazil and Argentina requires visas for official travelers on diplomatic, official, and/or personal passports. Official visitors contemplating travel to Iguazu Falls should advise the Embassy before doing so as well as Embassy Brasilia and/or Embassy Buenos Aires if they plan to cross into Brazil and Argentina. Travelers are reminded that Iguazu Falls is located on the border of Brazil and Argentina, about ten miles east of Ciudad del Este, Paraguay, and that travelers from Paraguay cross into Brazil.

¶6. Post recommends that even though you will be only transiting Brazil, you also obtain a Brazilian visa. If the airline cancels or delays its flight to Asuncion, then you may have to stay in Sao Paulo for one day while waiting for the next available flight to Asuncion. Brazilian authorities will not permit you to leave the airport to go to a hotel without a valid Brazilian visa. U.S. citizens may be fingerprinted and photographed upon entry into Brazil. This applies to holders of diplomatic and official passports, as well as tourist passports.

## 17. Threat Assessment:

1A. Political Violence-Terrorism: There are no political groups or parties currently active in Paraguay that specifically target U.S. interests. Because of reports indicating the presence of members of, and support for, extremist terrorists groups in the tri-border region (Alto Parana and Itapua Departments), visitors here cannot discount the possibility of terrorist activity, to include random acts of anti-American violence. Small, armed groups have also been reported to be operating in the Concepcion and San Pedro Departments.

1B. Crime: Paraguay is a high-threat post for crime. Petty street crime in the city of Asuncion and the immediate suburbs continues to be a problem for residents and visitors alike. Visitors to the city of Asuncion should be aware of problems with pickpockets or purse snatchers on the street or on public transportation. Until recently, most crime affecting visitors has been non-violent; aggravated robberies, shootings, etc., while not completely unheard of in Asuncion, were nonetheless uncommon. However, incidents of armed robberies of businesses and residences by criminal groups are occurring with greater frequency, and as a result, it is recommended that due caution be exercised when traveling about the city.

18. The seasons in Paraguay are the opposite of those in the United States. Asuncion's climate is extremely hot from November through April and cool or mild in July and August. The transitional seasons, May ) June and September ) October are unpredictable: they can be pleasant or hot. Health conditions generally are good. The water in Asuncion is potable, and there are few reports of intestinal or stomach problems. There is no endemic hepatitis or malaria in Asuncion although outbreaks of dengue fever are recurrent.

19. As of 15 December 2006 the exchange rate is approximately 5,320 guaranies to one US dollar. Personal finances: Official travelers may cash personal checks at the Embassy for amounts up to US \$5,000 monthly; and use their ATM cards at one of the many terminals located throughout the city. Because of restrictions with the embassy bank, ABN-AMRO, traveler's checks may only be cashed with one of the local exchange houses.

110. Laptops, Personal Digital Assistants (PDA) may not be brought into the Embassy without the prior approval of the Regional Security Office. Personally owned laptops, PDAs may not/not be used in the Embassy. USG-owned laptops may only be used in Controlled Access Areas (CAA) if the user certifies that the computer has been continuously under the personal control of a cleared American throughout transit. If this requirement is not met, the laptop can only be utilized outside of the CAA. USG-owned PDAs are under the same restrictions as cellular phones and other electronic devices, and may not be utilized within the CAA.

111. Security Clearance: State Department policy requires that all official visitors verify their security clearances, in writing, with the RSO in order to have unescorted access to the Embassy. Visitors whose clearances are not verified must be escorted at all times. TDY,ers must schedule a security in-briefing with the security office as soon as possible after arriving at post. Access badges will not be issued until the employee has acknowledged receipt of the required security briefing.

112. Administrative support: Each visitor, regardless of length of stay, must bring or forward fiscal data to pay for direct costs of the visit. Each agency, organization or visiting delegation will be charged for the actual costs attributed to its visit. Direct charge costs include, but are not limited to: American and LES overtime (for such services as airport expediting, cashier accommodation exchange, control room staffing, representational event

support), travel and per diem costs incurred by post personnel in support of visitor's field travel, rental of vehicles and other equipment, long distance telephone calls, office supplies, gasoline and other vehicle maintenance costs, departure tax and other airport fees. Post will not provide service if fiscal data is not provided for the direct charges.

¶13. For TDYers remaining at post over 30 days, there is a charge for ICASS support services. This charge is for the following ICASS services: Basic Package, CLO and Health Services. Agencies will not be billed until the accumulated invoice costs for TDY support exceeds \$2,500 for the fiscal year. If your sponsoring agency is not signed up for ICASS services at post, please be prepared to sign a Memorandum of Understanding for ICASS support services upon arrival. The agency should provide post with a written communication, generated by the traveler's headquarters, that confirms the agency will pay ICASS charges for the TDYer, provides the agency ICASS billing code to which the TDY support charges should be applied, and authorizes the traveler to sign the ICASS invoice generated by the TDY module. Where travel is urgent, the TDYer should bring this documentation with him/her to ensure there are not interruptions in the provision of service. Post will not provide service to a TDYer staying in excess of thirty days without provision of this documentation before day 31 of the TDY.

¶14. For further general information regarding travel to Paraguay travelers should consult the Department of State internet site at <http://travel.state.gov/>, which includes the latest consular information sheet for Paraguay.

¶15. We look forward to meeting and working with you. Warm regards.  
CASON